

# Stress

## 1-Page Summary

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### What is Stress?

Stress is a normal, biological reaction to any change that requires adjustment or response. The body reacts, in varying degrees, to these changes physically, mentally and emotionally. It is natural during this pandemic time that we will all undergo periods of increased stress, and that our stress will be expressed and experienced in different ways.

*Stress is normal*

### Common symptoms may include but are not limited to:

- Fear- of exposure, of isolation, of losing someone, of death, etc..
- Headache - stress is a common trigger for headaches.
- Aches and pains - associated with increased levels of the stress hormone cortisol.
- Sickness - stress may take a toll on your immune system.
- Decreased energy - stress may disrupt sleep and cause insomnia, leading to low energy.
- Digestive Issues - stress may cause diarrhea and constipation.
- Appetite Changes - stress may reduce or increase your appetite.
- Lack of concentration and critical thinking – associated with our brains higher functions shutting down for survival.
- Rapid Heartbeat - high levels of stress may increase your heartbeat, leading to a ‘jittery’ feeling.

### Actions you can take to manage stress include but are not limited to:

- Take care of your basic needs
- Look to your already developed healthy coping strategies
- Talk to someone
- Acknowledge what you are feeling
- Expression compassion for yourself and others
- Look to establish a resilience practice
- Focus on what you can control

*If your stress becomes overwhelming, please reach out to someone for support*

### Supports:

If your stress becomes unmanageable, you are not to blame. Everyone experiences stress and copes with it differently – everyone’s experience is valid. **If the stress becomes overwhelming, please reach out to supports including leaders, colleagues, friends, family or Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP), 1-888-336-3136.**